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CIRM NEW CELL LINES AWARDS ATTRACTS 57 LETTERS OF INTENT

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., January 15, 2008 – The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) today announced that it has received and accepted 57 letters of intent for the New Cell Lines Awards. 42 applications were received from non-profit organizations and 15 from for-profit companies.

The CIRM New Cell Lines Awards will provide up to \$25 million to support the derivation and propagation of new lines of pluripotent human stem cells that will have important research and clinical application for understanding, diagnosing and treating serious injury and disease.

Pluripotent stem cells have the potential to play a key role in regenerative medicine and in cell replacement therapies because of their unique ability to renew themselves and their potential to form almost all of the cell types of the body, including muscle, nerve, heart and blood.

“We are particularly excited to note that based on the letters of intent we have received there is a good balance between research that derives pluripotent stem cell lines from human embryonic stem cell lines as well as new, highly novel methods such as iPS” stated Alan O. Trounson, Ph.D., the newly appointed president of CIRM.

The Awards will fund qualified investigators to conduct research in California that will address the need for new types and sources of human pluripotent stem cell lines and the methods for deriving them. CIRM expects to fund up to 16 New Cell Lines Awards for three years and will support a broad range of research that uses the full spectrum of human cell types and experimental approaches. The Awards will support two categories of research and will give particular consideration to research applications that cannot be currently funded by federal programs:

- Derivation of new human embryonic stem cell lines using excess or rejected early-stage human embryos generated by *in vitro* fertilization.
- Derivation of pluripotent human stem cell lines from other sources using alternative methods such as, but not limited to, somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) or reprogramming of neonatal or adult cells (iPS cells).

Completed applications for the New Cell Lines Awards are due on February 5, 2008. Review of applications by the Grants Working Group is anticipated for March or April of 2008, with review and approval by the Independent Citizen's Oversight Committee (ICOC), CIRM's governing board, projected for June 2008.

About CIRM: CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 156 research grants totaling almost \$260 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.